LABOUR MONTHLY

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FRANCE – STUDENTS – WORLD IN MOVEMENT

Palme Dutt
Lance Samson

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J. D. BERNAL reviews 'The Double Helix'

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Future of the Left	J. R. Foster, Phillip Rendle
Capitalism in Crisis	Ron Bellamy
Royalty, Rape and Murder	Charles Chilton

JULY 1968

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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Notes of the Month

WORLD IN MOVEMENT

'The battle of France is not over. It is only beginning. De Gaulle, to adopt his own words of eighteen years ago—when he fought the men of Vichy instead of leading them—has won a battle. He has not yet won the war.'

'The New Battle of France', Notes of the Month, *Labour Monthly*, July, 1958.

'The decisive action drew near. It could be fought in France only; for France, as long as England took no part in the revolutionary strife, or as Germany remained divided, was, by its national independence, civilisation and centralisation, the only country to impart the impulse of a mighty convulsion to the surrounding countries.'

MARX, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, 'The Paris *Rising*', March 18, 1852.

June 12 1968

It moves. All the illusions of the successful stability of the 'new capitalism' during the past two decades are exploding. In the February Notes we wrote of 'The New Crisis of Capitalism', to show that the crisis of sterling devaluation was no isolated British phenomenon, but a symptom of the extending disintegration of the whole structure of the Western boasted 'crisis-free' 'new capitalism' since the war; that the United States and the dollar, which had been the main organiser of the 'economic miracles' of the 'new capitalism', would now become the main disorganiser and destructive force; and that the cracking of the contradictions of Western capitalism on a world scale would inevitably find expression in the political field, smash the illusions of class stability and reveal the 'gathering materials for explosion'.

Popular Upsurge

Since then, during the five months since we wrote of 'The New Crisis of Capitalism', the speed of events has quickened. Once again the Gallic cock has led the way. All the illusions of the quiescence of the Western working class; that revolution is henceforth confined to the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America; that in the metropolitan countries of Western imperialism the working class has become docile and adapted to the system: all these poisonous myths designed to deny the Marxist teaching of the key role of the working

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class and to disrupt the indispensable unity of the international front against imperialism have now begun to receive a series of shattering blows. Ten millions on strike in France, exceeding the previous record of three millions during the thirties which accompanied the Popular Front. Student demonstrations. Occupation of factories. Democratic challenge to the Gaullist regime. Three million engineers on their 24-hour token strike with 100 per cent solidarity in Britain. In West Germany, in West Berlin, show shop-window front of the cold war, where a subsidy now running at £350 million a year is being poured in to West Berlin to maintain that cold war shop window, where the towering citadel of the Springer press octopus has been arrogantly placed on the very frontier of East Berlin and the German Democratic Republic, armed police have now to ring that citadel to protect it, not against assault by the GDR, but against hostile popular demonstrations of inhabitants of West Berlin, and the armed police fire on these crowds to kill with a facility recalling Nazi days.

Signals of change

In Italy the Communist vote soars with an increase of 800,000 to 8½ millions, and the combined vote of the Communist Party and the socialists allied with it reaches ten millions, while the ill-advised Nenni Socialists, who entered into the coalition government with capitalism, go heavily down, and their executive has now decided against further coalition. In Britain the Labour Party, administering Tory capitalist policies, goes down in electoral rout in the local elections, and in the by-elections so far, while the trade unions surge forward with adoption of militant policies against the Government in conference after conference, and press forward their wage claims. In the United States 40,000 troops surround the White House and the Capitol in April to defend these citadels of the oligarchy against the anger of the population of Washington after the murder of Martin Luther King. The Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board declares on April 19 that 'the United States is in the midst of the worst financial crisis since 1931'.

Poverty in Revolt

The Poor People's Campaign in Washington has revealed the mass of poverty in the midst of American wealth: not just poverty in some statistical sense of low incomes and deprivation of decent conditions of living, but actual hunger while the grain rots in the granaries. The

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Report of the Citizens' Crusade Against Poverty, *Hunger USA*, discloses that 'ten million Americans are chronically undernourished', and the doctors' committee's interpretation makes clear that this is no verbal exaggeration: 'they are dying from hunger and disease, which means they are starving'. Nor is this only a question of racial oppression. 'Two out of every three poor Americans are white', summarises *Time* magazine on May 17 in a survey of these reports under a title 'A Nation Within a Nation', recalling Disraeli's 'Two Nations'. 'Some 280 of the nation's 3,100 counties are critical hunger areas.' And this in the wealthiest capitalist country. It was not the least of the inspirations of Martin Luther King that he was engaged in organising, at the moment when he was murdered in the midst of demonstrating in support of a strike, not this time a Negro Campaign in Washington, but a 'Poor People's Campaign', thus displaying to the world the unity of the struggle of all oppressed and exploited working people, white and non-white.

Popular Anger and Reactionary Violence

King was murdered when he was thus trying to give expression to the revolt of the poor against the rich, just as President Kennedy was murdered when he began to make his series of speeches calling for a complete re-orientation of American foreign policy and the ending of the cold war. And now the murder of the presidential candidate Robert Kennedy in the midst of his campaign has aroused horror throughout the world, and expressions of bewilderment at the state of a society which could thus engender the series of these three murders, highlighting a background of violent killings running at a rate of 6,500 a year. 'Almost 800,000 Americans have died by shooting since 1900, more than all the American dead in all the wars she has fought'. (*Guardian*, June 6). So President Johnson with his macabre instinct for gallows humour has appointed a Commission to enquire into the causes of violence in American society. 'Physician, Heal Thyself!' The violence is engendered and inculcated from above, from the highest circles, who will now enquire into it. The violence and wholesale killing of men, women and children is let loose on Vietnam, and is reciprocated within the United States. As the popular anger rises, the troops and machine-guns are massed around the White House and the Capitol, while de Gaulle confers with the gorilla Massu to surround Paris with tanks. Popular anger is met with reactionary violence. The trappings fall away. Class realities are laid bare. The peoples are on the move.

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Farewell, Illusions of Stability

To the very last the smug prophets of the success and stability of the 'new capitalism' of Western 'free society' clung to their illusions. Marxism, they boasted, had been disproved by practical experience. Revolutions were out of date. The contradictions of capitalism had been ironed out by modern methods of manipulation. Class divisions were disappearing as modern capitalism was evolving into a new 'classless' society without revolution being necessary to bring it about. Even as the storm was breaking in France in the early days of May, they were still singing hymns to the achievement of class unity in France and acclaiming the stability of the Gaullist regime:

> The country gives the appearance of a greater unity than it has had for generations.
>
> (Patrick Brogan in *The Times*, May 6, 1968)

As late as May 12, after the student demonstrations, de Gaulle was declared to be

> more firmly based in the support of most people, if not students, than either Harold Wilson or Lyndon Johnson
>
> (Peregrine Worsthorne in the *Sunday Telegraph*, May 12)

This was before the working class had come into action with the general strike of 24 hours on May 13, and the mass march of one million in Paris. Thereafter the same Peregrine Worsthorne began to scream about the menace of chaos and anarchy in France, and entitled his article in the *Sunday Telegraph* on June 2 'Dark Days in Europe'. This blindness of the fuglemen of a dying social order to what is happening in the real world is no new story. It was Lord Milner who was dispatched to Russia by Lloyd George in the winter of 1916-17, on a Mission representing the anxious War Cabinet, to enquire into the truth of allegations of a disturbed situation there, and in January, 1917, reported that there was no danger of a revolution in Russia.

Old Songs to New Tunes

Once their old gods are thus exposed, and the earth begins to shake beneath their feet, these apostles of neo-capitalism, anti-Marxism and anti-communism, hastily jump to the other extreme, and begin to proclaim that a wonderful 'revolution' is taking place, which is completely disproving Marxism and its obsolete dogmas about the role of the working class; which is really an idealist revolt against the 'materialism' and 'authoritarianism' equally of the

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modern capitalist states and the socialist states; and which is in danger of being 'betrayed' by the communists and the Communist Parties. Thus the old song is being sung to a new tune. The moral of the new lie repeats the moral of the old. The 'revolution' is described as being led by the students, who are dragging behind them a backward working class. On the basis of this picture the real positive role of the students, which is one of the most positive features of the present developing situation, is distorted in such a way as to counterpose them to the workers, present them as an independent classless force creating the revolution, while the working class with its 'materialist' concentration on mere economic aims is presented as a brake on the revolution. Thus once again the new picture repeats the old conclusion: the triumphant refutation of the obsolete class theories of Marxism.

Old Fallacies in a New Dress

This student revolt, which is thus presented as an independent classless force, is next presented as a revolt transcending distinctions of capitalism and socialism, and rebelling universally against the existing 'authoritarian' ruling regime in all countries, equally in capitalist and socialist countries, equally in Paris, Berlin, Prague or Belgrade. Here we can see the latest guise of the old familiar theory of 'convergence': that modern state monopoly capitalism and the modern socialist states are becoming more and more the same thing. This theory revels in all the superficial resemblances (mass production, automation, wages, surplus, problems of the market, and the like) without realising how much each factor, even when the name is the same, profoundly differs in real content, once it is seriously analysed in all its relations and functioning. But the whole theory is an elementary fallacy. The driving force of a society based on capitalist production, with private ownership of the means of production (also within the forms of capitalist nationalisation), and with the built-in contradiction of social production and private appropriation of the surplus, is the drive for maximum profit, for the expansion of capital to expand exploitation and extract the maximum surplus for the owning class. The driving force of a socialist society is maximum production for social benefit; there is no owning class in the means of production; incomes are based on work, not ownership. This basic distinction transforms every detailed aspect, when examined, even where there are superficial resemblances. The truth of this shows itself with exceptional clearness in this question of the students' demands.

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Students' Demands: Against Capitalism and For Socialism

Yes. There is ferment among students also in some socialist countries as well as in capitalist countries. Yes. Students are demanding democratic reform of the universities also in socialist countries as well as in capitalist countries. On both sides they are demanding more student consultation and participation in the running of the universities. So far there is resemblance. But as soon as we begin to examine more closely the content, the distinction appears. The demand for democratic reorganisation of the universities is not merely a demand concerning administration. It is also a demand which involves the whole social order. For it is a demand that the universities shall become representative of the whole population, and not primarily of a privileged élite. In France less than ten per cent of the students come from working class families. In Britain 'only a quarter of those entering university in 1955-56 were of working class origin' (Kelsall Report). There is no comparable problem in socialist countries. But the demand for this change in the class composition of the universities in capitalist countries cannot be fulfilled merely by changes within the universities. This demand necessarily involves the democratic reorganisation of the whole educational system of the entire population. But the fulfilment of this in turn, to be effective, requires the transformation of the existing capitalist class society. With courage and logic the student agitation in the main European capitalist universities has advanced to this demand. Whatever the varied currents in outlook and tactics, they are demanding the replacement of the capitalist social order by socialism.

Identity in Difference

Are the students in the socialist countries demanding the replacement of socialism by capitalism? Not at all. Again, whatever the varied currents, where there is agitation, they are demanding the improvement of socialism. In Belgrade, where there has been the nearest approach to the superficial appearance of resemblance, with occupation of university buildings, they are denouncing what they regard as concessions to capitalism and departures from socialism:

> They see socialised ownership threatened by present economic trends. Recently a group of individuals founded what is said to be a small private shareholders' factory in Yugoslavia. 'We are for social property, and against all attempts to establish shareholder capitalist enterprises', one of the student resolutions read.
>
> (*The Times*, June 5, 1968)

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Thus the apparent identity of student agitation conceals the difference in class content, corresponding to the difference in class structure in capitalist and socialist countries. All are agitating for democratic structural advance in the running of the universities. But when it comes to the question of the existing social order, the students in the capitalist countries are agitating for the destruction of the existing capitalist social order and the establishment of socialism. The students in the socialist countries are agitating for the improvement of the existing socialist order and the defence of socialism against the menace of any concessions to capitalism.

Ancient Anti-Communism in a New 'Left' Dress

The real purpose of this riot of fantasy and distortion which has been let loose in the millionaire press and by the acolytes of the 'new capitalism' in describing the events in France and the developments in Western Europe becomes clear as soon as the treatment turns to the Communist Parties. Here full hatred is revealed. Previously they combated Marxist theories of socialist revolution and denounced Communist Parties as revolutionary enemies of gradualist progressive evolutionary socialist advance. Now these old opponents of revolution have become apostles of a new gospel of a glorious 'revolutionary situation' having arisen in France, with glowing prospects of a socialist revolution, and on this basis they denounce the Communist Party once again, but this time as 'betraying' the revolution. Once again identity in difference. The more it changes, the more it is the same thing. The one stable point in their ever more rapidly swinging compass is hatred of communism and the Communist Party.

City Experts on Revolution

That once staid organ of the City, *The Economist*, whose authoritative expert judgement on all questions of revolutionary strategy and tactics will of course be received with proper respect by all true Marxist-Leninists, summarised the French situation in its International Report on May 25 under the title: 'A Revolution Set Alight by Students, Snuffed Out by Communists'. *The Times* on May 29 published a remarkable feature article by the Assistant Editor of *L'Express* describing the French Communist Party as 'terrified of being swept into a revolution' and a 'surprising rampart of society'. Even the occupation of the factories by the workers was revealed by this ingenious journalist to be a diabolical device of the communist

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leaders of the CGT 'not so much as a means of putting pressure on the management than as a protection against an invasion by "irresponsible elements from outside the factories".' The radio commentator described the French CP as 'contemptible'. Not to be outdone by the organs of finance-capital in playing this fashionable modern version of the old anti-communist tune, the *New Statesman's* editor, Paul Johnson, laid down in the issue of May 31 that 'the CP and the Gaullists are natural allies' (powerfully exemplified in the electoral broadcasts of de Gaulle), and in the issue of May 31 celebrated 'the astonishing rebuff inflicted by the French workers on the CP'.

> The most marked and attractive characteristic of the revolution through which France is passing is the conspicuous absence of materialism as the dominant motive. This is something which baffles the government and strikes fear into the hearts of the official communist leaders, whose entire approach to politics is based on a materialistic philosophy.

Tribune swelled the chorus with the article of Anthony Arblaster on 'The French Crisis' on May 31:

> This struggle has been frustrated, and its aspirations remain unfulfilled. Why? The answer lies in the conservatism of the French Communists.

The one theme common to all this wide range of organs of opinion from right-wing conservative to some claiming to be on the left is thus anti-communism and hostility to the French Party. This is an old tune. But its violent intensification in the midst of the present French crisis is the highest tribute to the French Communist Party.

A Classic Demonstration of Marxism

What happened in France? For the 99 per cent of the British public who did not have the benefit of the remarkably clear political and factual reporting of Lance Samson in the *Morning Star*, and have been dependent on the contradictory farrago offered them by the millionaire press organs, 'experts' and radio commentators, the confusion must have seemed extraordinary. At one moment the French CP is described as the ally of de Gaulle. At the next moment it is denounced by de Gaulle as the main menace to France. At one moment the communist leaders of the CGT are denounced for concentrating solely on economic demands and blocking the revolutionary political wishes of the students and workers. At the next moment the CGT is denounced as 'shedding any lingering pretence that its aims are anything but predominantly political' (*The Daily*

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Telegraph, May 30). No wonder the *Observer* columnist John Crosby complained by June 9 that he had 'leapt from expert to expert in search of the significance of it all', and that 'rarely can I remember so much significance, all of it wildly conflicting, about a single event'. Yet in fact the events in France during these recent weeks have demonstrated with classic clarity, worthy of the pen of the author of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* or *Class Struggles in France*, the operation of the class forces of capitalist society, also in the present conditions of the advanced stage of the general crisis of capitalism. Here has been revealed the role of the working class as the decisive force confronting capital for social change; and at the same time the fight to win the allies of the working class. The picture has demonstrated the role of the petty bourgeoise and the varying currents within the petty bourgeoisie; the role of the machinery of state; and the tactics of modernised variants of Bonapartism. Above all—and this is the decisive new feature of the modern situation—there has been demonstrated the key role of the firmly established and experienced Marxist mass party of the working class, able to give leadership in a complex situation which would have otherwise sunk in confusion or been at the mercy of provocative adventures of sections playing into the hands of reaction, and elaborating stage by stage the necessary strategic and tactical line, not for an insurrection which would have suited the book of the military dictatorship, but with patient consistency to build the alliance of the working class and all social sections opposed to monopoly capital in order to unite the majority of the people for the victory of democracy and thereby open the road for the advance to socialism.

International Context

The starting point of the events in France should be sought, not in France alone, but in the international context of the whole developing economic and political crisis of Western capitalist society and wide popular upsurge, which we have analysed in the earlier section of these Notes, and which has erupted to a specially high point in the recent events in France. Most expressive of the international character of the present battle has been the role of the Vietnam war and the universal movement of solidarity with the Vietnam people. Everywhere opposition to the American war of agression in Vietnam, and support for the heroic struggle of the Vietnam people, has been the common inspiration which has drawn the widest sections into movement in every country, and thereby sparked the flame of popular

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revolt. But this indomitable strength and unity and heroism of the Vietnam people over these decades of struggle for their freedom, which has won the admiration of the world, has only been made possible by the leadership of their Marxist-Leninist party, the party of the Vietnam working class and working people, the Vietnam Communist Party, with its continuous record of leadership of over one third of a century. In this sense it can be said that on the international plane the spark which lit the flame was not just some particular event in a particular country, not just the economic and political disequilibrium in each particular country, not just the students' revolt, but the universal inspiration and example and international significance of the struggle led by the Communist Party of Vietnam at the head of the heroic Vietnam people.

Ten Years of Struggle in France

Similarly in France the starting point of the upsurge which has taken place needs to be sought, not just in the immediate increasing economic hardships, or in the student revolt, but in the ten years of continuously developing struggle and mobilisation of the popular forces against the regime of personal dictatorship of de Gaulle—a struggle led throughout these ten years by the French Communist Party, at first almost in isolation, but with ever widening support, leading up to the present events. When de Gaulle came to power in 1958, the Communist Party was the only party calling for a 'No' vote to his referendum for his new constitution, for which 80 per cent voted Yes and 20 per cent voted No. By 1967 the party's vote had increased from 3.8 million in the election of 1958 to over 5 million in the election of 1967, or 22½ per cent, while the left alliance, which the party had worked to build, in association with Mitterrand, won 47 per cent of the total vote against 43 per cent for the Gaullists. Small wonder that in the present election de Gaulle has made his main electoral plank the battle against the CP as the decisive enemy from the point of view of the big bourgeoisie, and for this purpose has brandished the goriest Red Bogy, and sought to brand with it all those left political leaders who have associated with the CP, in the hope to terrify all the vacillating elements of the petty bourgeoisie into voting for conservatism.

> This approach casts M. Mitterrand, M. Guy Mollet, the socialist leader, and M. Mendès-France, in the outer darkness with the communists as enemies of the republic and of freedom. It is hardly a very promising prelude to the task of reform and national reconciliation (*The Times*, June 4).

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De Gaulle has evidently failed to pay attention to the British press and radio 'experts' ' definition of the CP as his ally and the main bulwark of conservative opposition to a socialist revolution.

Students' Role

It is in this context that the students' revolt in May needs to be seen. The fantastic caricatures by Fleet Street journalists and Fabian experts in revolution to describe this movement as the launching of a grandiose 'French Revolution', stabbed in the back and suffocated by the conservative French CP, has obscured the truly great social and political significance of this awakening and advance of new strata into the struggle. Previously the students in the Western capitalist countries used to be, as regards the majority, a reactionary force. In the countries of national liberation or approaching the democratic revolution the students have always been in the forefront of revolutionary struggle. But in the Western imperialist countries the progressive students used to be in a minority; the majority were either cautiously orthodox, or aristocratic playboys, or openly reactionary, or politically apathetic. Today solemn university seniors dilate on the supposed tradition of British universities to encourage complete freedom of discussion and reasoned expression of all viewpoints, provided there is no violence. Poppycock. Half a century ago, when an Oxford student sought to present a reasoned statement of a Marxist viewpoint on 'Socialism and the War' to a students' meeting, and a handful of rowdy jingo students sought to create a din outside, and broke some windows, the authorities promptly hauled up before them next morning and sent down permanently, not the rowdy jingoes, but the student who had made a reasoned Marxist statement to an orderly peaceful meeting. In the General Strike in 1926 the students provided the blacklegs. During the thirties anti-fascism brought some strengthening of the progressive forces; but the cold war froze things backwards.

Signal of the Future

Therefore when today wide sections of students in all the leading Western capitalist countries have come out in active progressive political struggle, for such aims as far-reaching democratic reform in the universities, against racialism or against the war in Vietnam, and sometimes for the complete transformation of the existing capitalist social order, this is a most welcome and heartwarming sign of the times and a barometer of future social and political change. Or course there is a mixture of all kinds of currents in this

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ferment. Only a fool would expect prematurely old heads to grow on young shoulders. It is natural that every trend and set of ideas is eagerly discussed. Experience in the struggle will help to sort these things out. Of course the millionaire press and broadcasting and television will greedily seek out the 'wildest' expressions they can find (and it can be assumed that the hundred-handed CIA will also have poked a few dirty fingers in) and will pour out the most lavish flood of publicity around the most picturesque and 'way out' personalities they can display to their public as supposedly 'typical' of 'modern youth', and thus fulfil their task to conceal the real social class issues behind chatter about the 'gulf of the generations'. But the most striking characteristic of the overwhelming majority of the students entering into the struggle today is their serious, active and practical approach, their candour and their courage.

Decisive Role of the Working Class

It is obvious to everyone, including the students themselves—at any rate to everyone except the New Fabian experts in 'revolution'—that the students are not an independent super-class force able to launch a revolution or overthrow capitalism. Within their university conditions they can combat and have combated with the greatest skill and tenacity to compel changes. But for their wider social aims they can only seek fulfilment as allies of the decisive social force for the fight against capitalism, the working class. 'In the world of capitalism,' as the Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party Brezhnev said at its 23rd Congress, 'there still operates with full force the main contradiction of capitalist society—the contradiction between capital and labour'. The truth of this was abundantly demonstrated by the succession of events in France in the days of May. So long as it was a movement of students the Pompidou Government on the night of May 10 let loose the brutal terrorist assault of the notorious riot police. But when on the following morning of May 11 the working class moved into action with the trade union call for a 24-hour general strike on May 13 as the answer to the brutality of the riot police, Premier Pompidou at once hurried to announce on May 11 the withdrawal of the police and a promise to concede the students' demands. There followed the prolonged strike movement, reaching to 10 million, with occupation of factories, combining the economic demands of the workers, voiced by the unions, and the political call, voiced by the Communist Party, for the replacement of the Gaullist regime by a Peoples' Government of Democratic Unity. De Gaulle waited in the hope that division would break up the unity which the

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party was building and the unions maintaining, or that sectional leftist provocations would give him the excuse for repression. The strength of the leadership of the party and the success in maintaining unity defeated his strategy. The giant Paris march on May 29, numbering 800,000 and now directly led by the CGT and the Communist Party, was the decisive proof. On May 30 de Gaulle, after military consultations, delivered his ultimatum: to dissolve the Assembly and call elections in the name of the fight against the Communist Party and its allies as representing the menace of 'totalitarian communism'.

Strategy of the French Communist Party

'Why not an insurrection?' demand the New Fabian experts in revolution. Even *The Times* editorial on May 31 knew better:

> The French Communist Party is well educated in the theory and practice of revolutions. It knows that 'left-wing communism'—playing at revolutions—is, in Lenin's famous phrase, 'an infantile disorder'. The takeover of power must be carefully planned, and the party must only strike when success is assured.

The most elementary study of Lenin's writings on the eve of October would have shown these 'revolutionary experts' the care and precision with which Lenin measured the exact disposition of forces, how July would have been premature because 'the army and the provinces could and would have marched on Petrograd', but how by October the Bolsheviks had won the majority in both the capitals, in the Soviet delegation to Kerensky's Democratic Conference, 'the entire Baltic fleet and all the Russian troops in Finland', 49 per cent voting for the Bolsheviks in the Moscow elections and 'among the soldiers fourteen out of seventeen thousand', etc., etc. Was there any such ripeness of the situation in France in May 1968? The unions, with three politically divided federations, still only organised together one-fifth of the working class. The majority of the workers on strike were concentrating on the economic demands more than the political call. In the stronghold of the Renault plant the convenor of one of the groups of shop stewards, Roger Collete, was reported as saying to *The Sunday Times* correspondent in their issue of June 2:

> If you watch the people at the strike meeting you will notice one thing. When they are talking about their immediate demands they are as one, but when any of the speakers mention politics it is only the Communists who applaud.

The party correctly combined the economic demands and the political call appropriate to the situation. The statement of May 17 proclaimed the aim 'to win the pressing demands of the workers, and,

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beyond that, to end the Gaullist regime and to install with the least possible delay democracy opening the road to socialism'. The declaration of May 18 calls for the removal of the de Gaulle Government and the formation of 'a popular and democratic Government'. The Manifesto of May 20 set out the aims: (1) 'satisfaction of the fundamental demands of the working class' in the economic and social sphere; (2) 'satisfaction of the fundamental demands at the universities'; and then (3) the political call, 'the common aim of all forces which want to build France's future':

> The great mass of people, whose action is decisive, are not taking part in an effort to plaster the cracks in the personal power regime, nor in an insurrectional strike, but in a vast movement leading to the elimination of the Gaullist Government and of the Gaullist regime, and the accession of a real Republican regime, with all the left forces, opening the road to Socialism.

This is the battle which goes forward.

Winning the Majority

The problem of France for over a century and a half has been the ceaseless confrontation and successions of revolution and counter-revolution, with a balance of massive forces divided between the two camps, and with temporary victories of the working class and the people followed by the restoration of conservative reaction. To solve this situation the first task is for the working class and its party to build up the broad alliance with other social sections against the domination of big capital, and thus to establish a stable popular majority capable of winning the battle for democracy and opening the road to Socialism. This is the task which the French Communist Party and people are setting themselves to accomplish. The lessons for us in Britain are manifest. Advance against hated reactionary policies requires unity of all the progressive forces of the working class and people on the basis of an alternative programme to win a majority for such a programme. Unity needs to include all sections, including the Communist sections of the working class ('No Unity of the Left Without the Communists'), in the common fight. The prospective lifting of the ban on Communists holding office by the Transport Workers' Rules Conference is a welcome pointer. When the Communist Party, the Left in the Labour Party and the trade unions now increasingly advancing into political activity against existing reactionary policies can go forward together, with a final end to disruptive McCarthyite bans and proscriptions, in a great common campaign to mobilise the people, the way will open to a new political future in Britain. **R.P.D.**

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FRANCE—LESSON IN UNITY

Lance Samson
Diplomatic Correspondent of the Morning Star

IT would be nice to be able to say in retrospect that one had foreseen and forecast that the upsurge against the Gaullist regime —bound to come sometime—was to reach flood-level in May.

Exactly ten years after General de Gaulle rode to power on the backs of General Massu and the Algiers *putsch*—what could be fitter?

But I can claim no such prescience. My presence in Paris for the *Morning Star* at the beginning of May owed more to the General's foreign policy, which had led to the French capital becoming the venue for the Vietnamese-American talks, than to the struggles against his home policies and his entire regime of personal power, the struggles which in the event have become the most remarkable development since Liberation twenty-four years ago.

This article is not so much an attempt to tell again the day-by-day developments as notes to try to shed light on some of the major questions which are being asked about these events.

'Ten years—that's enough,' was one of the slogans heard again and again in the powerful May demonstrations, starting with the million-strong united march called by the Communist Party, the Left Federation, and the main trade union federations on May 13.

This demonstration, and the 24-hour general strike which accompanied it, showed how much the French people wanted to rid themselves of the Gaullist regime, how ready many were to do something toward achieving a real change, and toward getting demands pressed in vain for many years.

'The French people have had enough of being subjects—they want to be citizens,' Communist Party general secretary Waldeck Rochet summed it up a few days later.

The May 13 mammoth march was to protest against the hated CRS riot police's brutality against student demonstrators in the now notorious battle of rue Gay Lussac just south of the Sorbonne University in the Latin Quarter during the night of Friday, May 10.

To protest against police brutality, to protest against the Government which had ordered the police action and to express solidarity and support for the students whose demands—for university autonomy, participation in running the universities, fundamental

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changes in the content and methods of education, changes in the selection system, more funds for better facilities and grants—mirrored policies for which the Communist Party had been campaigning for many years.

It was the students' struggles, and the ferocious police brutality with which they were met, which acted as the fuse for a powder keg of ten years of accumulated discontent, a powder keg which had already been sizzling for a long time.

Five hundred thousand unemployed; profits trebled in de Gaulle's ten years, but real wages only up by one fifth at best; last year's social security cuts, while huge sums are spent on the militarily-useless nuclear strike force; more and more power in the hands of Big Business and of the President ruling the country in its name, while de Gaulle's authoritarian rule has removed even the trappings of democracy, reduced the National Assembly's role to virtually nothing, and blocked every normal avenue for people to have a say in running their own country. Those were among the chief ingredients filling the keg of discontent to overflowing.

From the start of the Gaullist regime the Communist Party had campaigned against the General's rule and all it meant, and as a result of the Communists' patient efforts for unity in the factories, in the cities, towns and villages, they had been joined in this opposition at all levels increasingly by other sections of the Left.

So the May events, sparked off by the police attack on the campaigning students, were the logical development of struggles already consistently waged in many spheres.

The May 13 24-hour General Strike, though called by the main national trade union federations, was nothing like as massive and widespread as the strike movement which was to follow, because the May 13 strike was basically 'political' and did not command the same united support as the strike for basic claims which succeeded it. Also, the 24-hour strike was called at very short notice.

But within 24 hours one medium-sized aircraft factory's workers went on strike and occupied their plant; within 48 hours, one of the smaller Renault factories was occupied by its striking car workers; and one day after that the huge 30,000-strong Renault factory at Billancourt in south-west Paris, as France's biggest, often the pilot, plant in French working-class struggles, set the avalanche of stay-in strikes rolling, by voting to strike and stay put.

The signs were clear. After years of struggles, years of demands, years in which Government and employers had refused the negotia-

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tions which the CGT, left wing and biggest of the three trade union federations, had demanded, for the past two years pressing for them jointly with the CFDT, the second largest trade union federation, the time was ripe for a massive united blow to obtain at the very least major concessions from the regime, and possibly ripening for more.

Already on May 15, the CGT distributed four million copies of an appeal.

May 15 was before the stay-in strike avalanche had begun really to roll. This ought to put paid to the mischievous press tittle-tattle about a spontaneous movement by militant workers 'forcing' unwilling CGT and Communist Party leaders to act.

As it is a key document for an understanding of the May struggles, and as it has, so far as I know, never been published in full in this country, I make no apologies for giving its main paragraphs:

> The democratic reform of the universities and of education is a national necessity and directly interests the working class. The CGT has long taken part in actions toward this end, in alliance with the teachers' organisations and supporting the just hopes of the great majority of students . . .
>
> Action can and must everywhere be carried to a higher level.
>
> It is possible to make the employers hold discussions at all levels, and to make them grant demands which up to now they have obstinately refused.
>
> It is possible to make the Government re-establish the rights of the Social Security system, and to impose on the Government a real employment policy.
>
> Act without waiting. Gather at your work-places. Take part in deciding the claims and the methods of action in your enterprises, your branches of industry, and your regions.
>
> The CGT will take all the necessary responsibility and initiatives to organise your action, to ensure co-ordination . . .

The appeal rejected the attempts by some 'petit bourgeois hotheads' to give 'lessons' to the working class and its responsible leaders. The working class 'knows how to brush aside provocations aimed to divide it, to isolate it and to turn it from its goals'.

> It is with the working class, around it, that all those who really want to go forward, toward profound economic and social transformations, must act.

The appeal underlined the importance of unity in action, and added:

> But some reservations remain about reaching the Common Trade Union Front which would give the working class irresistible force.
>
> Intervene to remove the obstacles which remain on the road to unity.
>
> The replacement of the present regime by a people's Government, the changes for which we are struggling . . . depend on unity and the joint action of all the victims of the present policy . . .

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The appeal did not directly call for strikes and sit-ins: it left it to the workers to decide on the form of their action, just as the trade union leaders left it to them to decide what concessions to accept as sufficient for returning to work.

But within a few days, ten million people were on strike, occupying their factories, mines, railway stations, offices, department stores—united, highly organised and self-disciplined, with red flags hoisted aloft. Members of the CGT and CFDT and the Force Ouvrière trade union federation, workers belonging to none (only three million of France's 15 million workers are in the unions)—all came out together.

The day that the Renault main plant stopped work on May 16, the Communist Party's political committee declared:

> The unity which has developed during the recent events between students, university staffs, the working class and all work people is favourable for the raising and the success of the struggles against the policies of the Gaullist regime and for the satisfaction of the pressing demands of the workers: general wage rises, job security, cuts in hours without loss of pay, cancellation of the decrees against the social security system, defence of working-class liberties.
>
> The conditions are rapidly ripening to end the Gaullist rule and to promote a real, modern democracy conforming to the interests of the people and of France.

And the Party's leaders warned against all 'adventurist slogans'.

With the strike spreading fast, Waldeck Rochet declared on Saturday, May 18: 'It is time to envisage the formation of a people's government of democratic unity.'

The call was taken up, and two days later the Communist Party urged the formation all over France of action committees to demand such a Government, a Government opening the way to socialism. Thousands of such committees were set up.

At the same time the Communist Party stepped up its efforts to reach what it had long been urging on the Left Federation led by François Mitterrand: a fully worked out joint governmental programme, to present the country with a complete alternative to the Gaullist Government's policies.

What did General de Gaulle and his men do meanwhile?

After the May 10 police-student battle, they promised university reform—an experts' committee was to sit on it (in both senses).

After the May 13 strike and demonstration, they withdrew the police from the Sorbonne, and students occupied the university and all France's other universities. General de Gaulle himself flew to

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Romania—only to have to cut short his visit at the week's end because the strike showed which way the tide was flowing.

When the strikes had grown to ten million strong, when 400,000 people had demonstrated in Paris at the call of the CGT, the General on May 24 came out with his June 16 referendum gimmick, and the next day the Government and the employers at last reluctantly agreed to negotiations which the unions had urged days before.

After the strikers had virtually unanimously rejected as insufficient the concessions offered in 27 hours of talks, the Government and the employers were forced to agree to negotiations in each separate branch of industry—and were forced to yield considerable further concessions.

A 35 per cent rise in the guaranteed minimum wage affecting four million workers; average wage increases ranging between 12 per cent and 20 per cent; one-hour or two-hour cuts in the working week (at 47-48 hours the longest in Western Europe); one to nine days extra holidays a year; extension of trade union rights in many industries; and full pay for the strike days (half-pay in some industries)—these were the concessions eventually wrested from the employers and the Government.

But first there came the magnificent 800,000-strong demonstration through Paris called by the CGT supported by the Communist Party on May 29.

To that, de Gaulle's answer was his Baden-Baden flight to assure himself of the support of General Massu and other top generals—and his broadcast the next day announcing that he would not quit, would drop the referendum and instead dissolved the National Assembly for a General Election on June 23 and 30.

At the same time he launched the tirade against 'totalitarian Communism' which he and his men have kept up ever since, and threatened to take steps other than elections if the 'situation of force' did not end.

Just as the strikes and the demonstrations had shown the unity and the strength of the movement against the Gaullist regime, so the General had shown that that regime, badly shaken, partly disabled, was not yet on its last legs.

If the Communist Party had heeded the shrill cries of the leaders of ultra-Leftist groups to launch an insurrection, the Left unity built up so painstakingly would have been destroyed at one blow, and the hopes for a government opening the road to socialism would have been drowned for decades to come in a blood-bath.

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Instead, the working class scored a major victory in winning gains no other West European postwar struggle has obtained in such a short time, forced de Gaulle to face new elections, reduced the Gaullists' base in the country and widened that of the Left.

At the time of writing, the elections have yet to be held. Street demonstrations and eleven ultra-Left organisations have been banned, after the regime's police made fullest use of the opportunities offered by these groups' tactics to try to frighten sections of the population with a picture of street violence.

Within the Left, the Communist Party's efforts succeeded in getting the Left Federation to agree at least to an economic emergency plan, including nationalisation of banks, insurance companies, aircraft and space firms, and a cut in the nuclear strike force expenditure, though not yet to a full governmental programme.

As in the 1967 elections, in the second round the two parties will leave just the best-placed candidate in each constituency to carry the fight against the Gaullists.

Having failed to prophesy the May upsurge, I will risk none about the elections. But it is widely forecast that France's mass working-class party, the Communist Party, which has increased its vote at every election since de Gaulle came to power, will do so again.

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

The Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Democracy

The socialist revolution is not one act alone, not a single struggle on a single front but a whole epoch of intensive class-conflicts, a long series of struggles on all fronts, i.e., in regard to all economic and political questions, struggles which can only culminate in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a fundamental mistake to imagine that the struggle for democracy is liable to divert the proletariat from the socialist revolution or to obscure and to overshadow it. On the contrary, just as it is impossible for socialism to be victorious without realising full democracy, so also the proletariat is not able to prepare itself for victory over the bourgeoisie unless it conducts an all-sided determined and revolutionary struggle for democracy.

(From 'The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-determination', by Lenin, written in April 1916 and translated into English for the first time in *Labour Monthly*, July 1928.)

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'IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE — CAN IT?'

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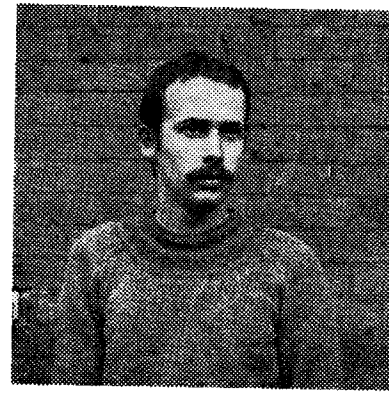
THE ARTS TODAY

Edited by Stuart Douglass

A DECLARATION OF INTENT

by a student of typography

Peter Hammarling, here making his declaration, was born in 1947. He is half Swedish. Educated at a comprehensive school in London. Originally wanted to be a journalist but working on a magazine turned his interest towards the printing side. Member of the Young Communist League.



I FOUND it difficult to know when writing this exactly how I did feel. It is difficult when writing something fairly personal like this not to fall into the trap of writing for one's audience rather than for oneself, but I feel it has made me put together random thoughts into some kind of order in my mind and I think that what I have written is a genuine assessment of beliefs and intentions.

One of the first facts we were made to realise as students is that good typography will usually go unnoticed. For the average reader does not consider, for example, the typeface or length of line used in his book. If some aspect of the production forced its attention on him through its peculiarity or unsuitability then something has come between the author and the reader. This passage of ideas through print is what typography is concerned with.

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Much of today's typographic design has a clinical, cold look. It can be said in its favour that this is orderly and assists in quick communication, but I think this style of design has its place and should not cover such a wide range of publications as it does at present. (Bound up with this is the nauseatingly frequent use of the *Univers* type family. I hope designers will rebel against this, or what is, to me, the best 'sans serif' typeface will become debased and die too soon in the same way that fashionable clothes do.) Arrangements of type can communicate well and look orderly and yet have an individual character and life about their appearance.

Design can often be a means though, to a banal end especially in the commercial world. It can assist in inducing consumers to spend on a product which is not necessarily better than its rivals. A product need not be superior, all it needs is superior advertising, the tremendous cost of which is passed on to the consumer. It is difficult to imagine England without advertising, for often I think ads are very entertaining and are the results of genuine creative work, but there is no doubt that it is an incredibly wasteful industry. What commercial work to undertake and what to leave I hope will be easy decisions for me, but for non-politically minded designers there is no reasonable alternative. Although many, I'm sure, can see the waste caused by the industry, there are not that many other ways for designers to earn a living.

The most important impetus behind my studying, after my personal interest in design and communication, is my hope that I can do a useful job in the labour movement. Sometimes I see left publications which, because of the lack of money and design advice, appear shoddy or confused. It is criminal that literature with such important content should have to suffer this way and be confined to limited circulation, while reactionary print backed by huge sums of money, and not because of its virtue, enjoys superior materials and distribution channels.

Good design can be a powerful weapon, so I've got to turn out good.

The picture of the Ballad-monger shown overleaf is reproduced from Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*, 1851.

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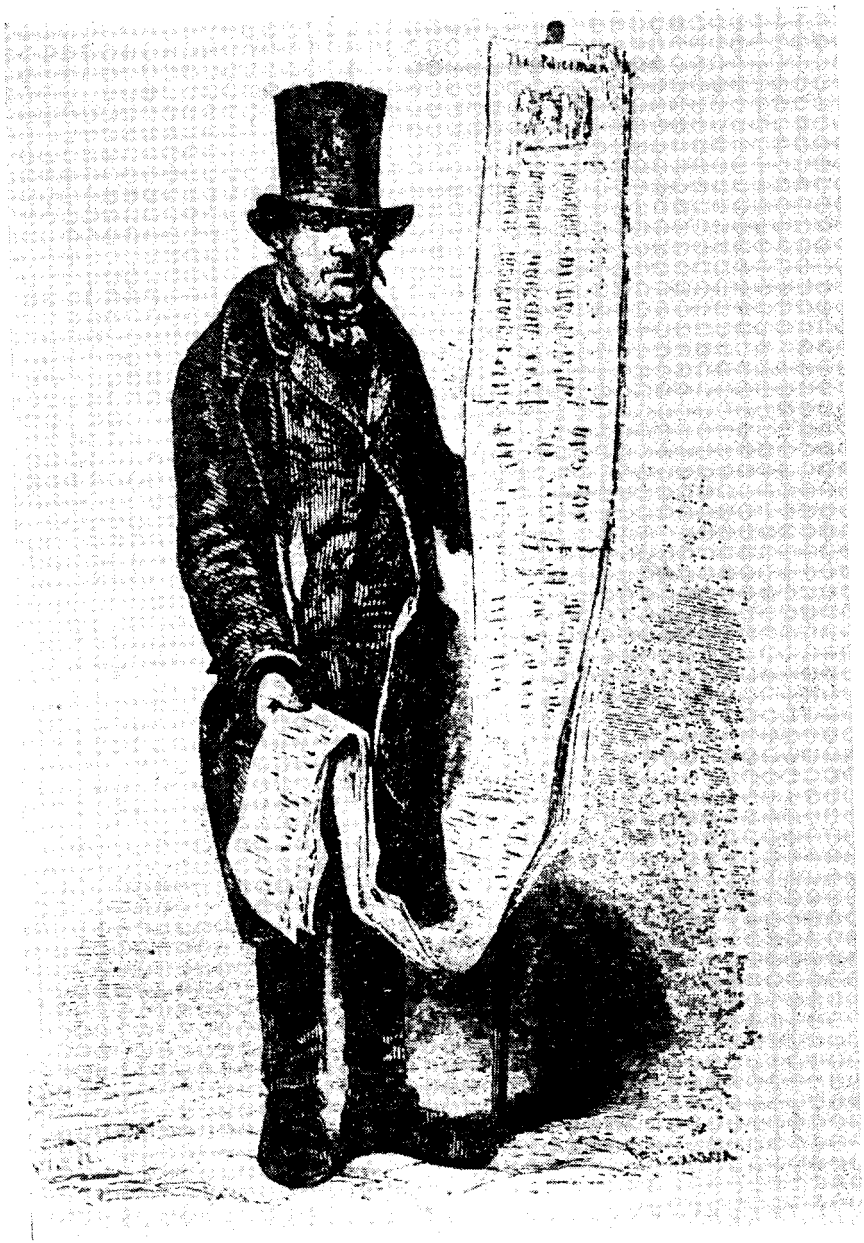

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Shocking Rape and Murder

One night he met her in the field,
And vile proposals made ;
How can I do this wicked thing,
Young Jane then weeping said.

He quickly threw her on the ground,
He seized her by surprise,
And did accomplish his foul act,
Despite her tears and cries.

Her lover passing by that way
Discovered her in tears,
And when he found what had been done
He pulled the monster's ears.

Young Hodges with the bill-hook
Then cut young Edwards down :
And by one fatal blow he felled
Jane Williams on the ground.

There side by side the lovers lay
Weltering in their blood :
Young Jane was dead, her lover lived,
Though ebb'd away life's flood.

Old Williams sought his daughter dear,
When awful to relate,
He found her lifeless body there,
Her lover's dreadful fate.

Now in one grave they both do lie,
These lovers firm and true,
Who by a cruel man were slain,
Who'll soon receive his due.

In prison now he is confined,
To answer for the crime.
Two lovers that he murdered,
Cut off when in their prime.

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Charles Chilton

ROYALTY, RAPE AND MURDER

(Readers may have heard Charles Chilton's musical documentary 'Work, Boys, Work' which he wrote and produced to mark the Centenary of the TUC on June 2. In the article below Charles Chilton writes about one of the principal sources of the songs for this and many of his radio programmes on British social history: the Broadside or Street Ballad.)

THE TRADITIONAL ENGLISH BALLAD was developed during the Middle Ages. Its purpose was two-fold; it served as a means of entertainment and it preserved many myths and legends which would otherwise have been lost. The subjects of medieval ballads include accounts of great battles (Chevy Chase), disasters to Royal families and their retinues (Sir Patrick Spens), outlaws (Robin Hood) and so on.

With the invention of printing, ballads were set down in permanent form. The printing of ballads also brought about a change in their use; besides recounting outstanding events they became a means of protest. During the Reformation and the uneasy times of the great religious persecutions that followed, ballads for or against the King, Catholicism or Protestantism were printed and sold in the streets. People bought, read, preserved or burned them according to their religious views. The publication of some ballads led to the burning of their unfortunate authors or printers. The production of religious and political ballads (in those days very closely linked) increased greatly during the 17th century.

As output increased, the subjects became more varied; social and, often, economic problems began to be discussed in ballad form.

'The Poor Whore's Complaint—poor whores starve while court-whores ride in carriages'.

'The Poor Man Pays for All'.

'All Things be Dear but Poor Men's Labour'.

Although there are many extant ballads on the Revolution in America, the wars with France, the evils of the Navy press gang and so on, production of ballads during the 18th century dropped considerably. In the early part of the 19th century, when tremendous social, industrial and political changes were taking place in Britain, the output from the broadside press reached staggering proportions. Broadsides found their way into every poor home in Britain and a considerable number of middle-class ones as well. Nineteenth-century broadsides or 'street ballads' as they came to be called, were, like many popular newspapers of today, aimed at the lower orders of society.

Broadside presses existed in every town. The centre for London was the Seven Dials in the Parish of St. Giles. The most successful printers there were Jemmy Catnach, an emigrant from Alnwick in Northumberland, and Johnny Pitts.

The broadside publisher's method of production was as follows. A report was read in *The Times* of some national event which, in the opinion of the printer, would have an appeal to his own readers. He would then call in a 'penny-pot poet' to write up the news in ballad form while a fiddler played the tune to which it was to be set. The usual fee for such verses was a shilling plus a number of free copies.

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The fee was usually spent on drink—hence the term 'penny-pot'.

This means of obtaining words for ballads and songs was current even in Elizabethan times and was still being carried on in the 'pop' song district, not a stone's throw from Seven Dials, in the 1920s.

The ballads having been written, the verses were printed and hawked through the streets at a penny or halfpenny a copy. Thus the ballad became the poor man's newspaper, even though the news may have become somewhat distorted by the time he read it. The printer or the poet had no scruples about changing names, location, dates or times if they felt such practices would increase the sales of the sheets.

In Jemmy Catnach's time (1814-40), the best-selling news items were royalty, rape and murder, in that order. His ballads and prose accounts of the trial of Queen Caroline sold by the thousand and established Catnach as the foremost broadside printer in Britain. He took the side of the Queen—so did the poor, who were his principal readers.

'Like harmless lamb
That sucks its dam
Amongst the flowery thyme
Or turtle dove
That's given to love
And that's her only crime.'

He followed up his Carolina ballads with others on William IV and, his most successful, Queen Victoria. He was particularly successful with his accounts and criticisms of her marriage to Prince Albert. Albert wasn't at all popular with the common people at first. He was regarded as a poverty-stricken German prince out to acquire the Queen's fortune and usurp the British throne.

'Here I am in rags
From the land of all dirt
To marry England's Queen
My name is Prince Albert.'

Catnach printed twenty-three ballads on the royal wedding. Many of them suggested that one reason for the hasty marriage of Victoria and Albert was that she was in a 'comical way'.

Another best seller contained this verse:

'Prince Albert he did have a dream
That he was on board a ship of steam
But when he awoke it was no dream
For he was on board the British Queen.'

(The double meaning here is good enough for 'Round the Horn'—the British Queen, the newest and largest steamboat of its day, had just been launched.)

Second only to ballads on royalty as best sellers were the accounts of murders and murder trials. Such broadsides made the fortunes of Catnach, Pitts and many provincial printers.

The ballad on the murderer, James Rush (1849) sold two and a half million copies. The account of Corder (he murdered Maria Marten in the Red Barn near Ipswich in 1828) sold 1,660,000.

Rape, infidelity and general sex subjects—'The Female Husband', 'Shocking Scandal in this Neighbourhood', for example—also reaped good financial returns as did ballads on piracy, earthquakes, highway robbery, natural disasters, fires, storms, sea monsters, bloomers and other sensations.

Ballads on social questions never achieved the sales of royalty, rape or murder but nonetheless were produced in great quantity, especially during times of economic depression, pit accidents and elections. Hundreds of ballads were printed on such subjects

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as Trade Unionism, Chartism, Strikes, Unemployment and Child Labour. The social ballad stood, as it were, for the broadside 'opinion column'. It was always on the side of the workers.

There is no doubt that the sale, circulation and learning and singing of these ballads helped spread the 'gospel' of the working-class movement throughout Great Britain. A glance at some of the titles will show this:

'New Song on the Stockport Strike'; 'The Mill has shut down'; 'The Miner's Complaint'; 'The Appeal of the Unemployed'; 'Peterloo'; 'The Crisis' (Chartist ballad, 1846); 'New Song on Reduction of Workers' Wages'; 'Flare up and Join the Unions'; 'A Labourer is Worthy of His Hire'; 'Framework Knitters' Lament' (Luddite Ballad); 'New Song on the Blackburn Lockout' (1829); 'God Save the People' (1830).

There are literally hundreds of them still extant. There must be thousands that have been destroyed and gone for ever. Broadsides were printed on cheap thin paper. The term means 'printed one side of an unfolded, broad, single sheet'. They were not very durable. Those that have come down to us have been carefully collected and preserved by such foresighted people as Samuel Pepys and Anthony Wood in the 17th century and Baring-Gould, Ashton and Crampton in the 19th.

Catnach was so successful as a broadside printer that he was able to retire with some £6,000 to a grand house in South Mimms, Hertfordshire, before he was fifty. (£6,000 in the 1840s would be worth about £40,000 today.) He died in 1844 and was buried in Highgate cemetery. His famous press continued to produce ballads for many years after his death under the proprietorship of W. S. Fortey.

In 1850 the production of broadsides went into a decline. Popular and free education dispensed by Church and humanitarian societies were creating a new type of reader. Ballads had always been read by a few literate men to a greater number of illiterate ones who memorised the words and passed them on by singing them at social gatherings, union meetings, harvest-home suppers and other functions. This is the origin of much of today's 'folk' music. Many of Catnach's penny-pot creations have been passed down by oral means and have often become considerably changed in the process.

Inns used to line their walls with broadsides, using them as wall-paper and sticking new ones over the top of old when the walls were completely covered. Thus singers and reciters in the remotest villages were able to read or have read to them the 'latest news and scandals' from London or some other great industrial centre such as Manchester, Newcastle or Birmingham.

It was the Elementary Education Acts of the 1870s that finally killed the broadside. By the 1880s there were a sufficient number of literate people in the kingdom to make the production of cheap penny newspapers a commercial success. The penny papers took over a ready-made public. Even today the best selling subjects in the cheaper and more popular press are still royalty, sex and murder.

The end came in 1883 when the part of Monmouth Street, where most of the broadside presses were housed, was pulled down by the Metropolitan Board of Works to make way for 'the new street to be built from Leicester Square to New Oxford Street'; that 'street' is now Charing Cross Road.

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Future of the Left (1)

(D. N. Pritt's article, 'Future of the Left', in our May issue has aroused considerable interest among our readers. We print below two contributions to this vital discussion.)

BECAUSE WE ARE THE CHALLENGERS

J. R. Foster

THE history of progressive and revolutionary activity is festooned with argument. Each sect applies to the main stream all its own art, courage and intellect, yet still, with rare exceptions, certainly in this country, these endeavours fail to achieve the basic solution, namely, a change in the system of society.

It is because we are the challengers that the debate rages with such intensity and often, with the ebb of each tide of activity, lays bare the reasons for our failure—our disunity. For it exists and, perhaps, derives from this very intensity. So deep runs the feeling that each left section thinks the other a shade of reaction—but this is not so.

This current high flow of discontent, coupled with the urgent need for change, is paradoxical and sharpened by the existence of a social democratic movement.

It has been argued that social democratic reform leads the Movement away from the path to Socialism and is, indeed, even more dangerous for it has within it, at all time, the graver dangers of Fascism.

Example (a) The racialist activity of Enoch Powell and the surprise, indeed, alarm expressed that some members of the proletariat fell in with this shameful action.

Example (b) Government—by unquestionable and unchallengeable corridors of the DEA, City and banks, and for the interest of supermonopoly on the specious argument that this is the only way towards industrial profits and prosperity—which still leaves real power in the hands of the few.

Surely, there is another argument. Social democracy also contains the portent of great development of the forces of the working class when it counters the 'inevitability of gradualness' with the urgent need for radical, then revolutionary change.

Each tide must compel an understanding between all the elements,

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thus the required change flows from the deepest form of unity, involving the maximum number.

Apparently, the right wing consider, based upon the historical development of the trade union movement in Britain, it easy to organise and control the trade unions as a bulwark of their establishment. This suffered a severe jolt (half a million majority) at the special gathering of executives in February 1968 when the TUC, acting as special agent for the Government, sought to impose its Incomes Policy. While arguing that they plot the path through social welfare to Socialism, they fondly hope to educate the ruling class to accept them, then us—the mass.

Countless activists are flabbergasted with the nauseating jingo which labour leaders use in interpreting the basic problems of capitalism, in which they see nothing wrong, but which stretch the nation's resources to the limit to support capitalist extension to the extent of £1,000 m. in the current year (Miss Jenny Lee's statement on Monday, May 20, 1968 at Cannock, Staffs, Labour Party Conference). This demonstrates the abysmal lack of faith in the working class, thus diverging influences affect all sectors and, at this point in time, create the greatest possible dangers.

Our movement is compelled to seek that common denominator, enabling it to widen further the cracks in these reactionary policies affecting every major front—education, health, standard of living, trade, jobs, peace. All understand the needs of the people—nationally and internationally—deploring the continuing exploitation in a world of plenty.

The weaknesses continue with a serious lack of rapport between intellectuals and workers, workers and the students, youth and society, members of parliament and the mass—yet, all are in battle.

That the Labour Party is discredited, as the local elections have displayed, is a sharp lesson in the need for left unity which now requires it to place before the labour leadership one of two alternatives—

(a) Either it puts into practice the election pledges and ceases to buttress capitalism, or

(b) is individually replaced—and there is an abundance of calibre within the left.

On this there is common ground between Communists, Catholics, Labour Party, Liberals, youth, intellectuals, students, believers, non-believers and 'far outs'.

While the Morning Star articles, celebrating the TUCs centenary, have blue-printed a pattern of necessary industrial unity, a practical

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lesson of this form of activity was demonstrated within the engineering industry which achieved a change in the leadership in order to open up the possibilities of a progressive policy.

Inevitably, the membership came to understand that the baronial leadership required to be changed in order to retrieve the progressive policy of the major union in that industry. Thus in 1967, centred around the election of the president, this was the central issue and became the first essential prerequisite.

In spite of all the differences and difficulties, coupled with an unprecedented TV and press campaign, the left forged the essential unity, based upon the strength of the rank and file, achieving an outstanding victory with the election of Hugh Scanlon as president.

With this experience, it is now possible in vital industrial sectors to think and act in a practical way but the course which the left must pursue requires unfettered and complete faith in the rank and file and their ability to achieve progress—without which the movement is nothing.

The thinking on the industrial front projects the most radical ideas—extension of public ownership; workers' full participation in industry; declaration of no further repressive proposals which may merge from the Royal Commission; all anti-trade union legislation abandoned; Prices and Incomes Act repealed.

Such is the ferment in the minds of the mass of people involved in the current struggle between the unions and the engineering employers that a substantial increase is only an immediate solution which the employers must be forced to concede and, when they do, the Government will be compelled to face up to this fait accompli. The Government will stand, in spite of the Prices and Incomes Act, dependent upon its integrity and ability to honour its election pledges. If not, as in France, for the heat can be felt, it will fall and, with high tide, unity becomes axiomatic with action.

Future of the Left (2)

FOR A UNITED SOCIALIST FRONT

Phillip Rendle

THE tragedy of Britain is this. First, we have a reformist government which only pays lip-service to socialism, refuses to adopt any bold and fearless policies to advance the cause of the evolution

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towards a socialist system and, perhaps most important, displays no sense of internationalist socialist solidarity. Secondly, the British people have no known future, no plan, programme or agenda to follow.

When Labour won the chance to revitalise British politics, when the people elected a socialist party to power, the British people prepared themselves for a new system. Nothing changed. Nothing ever changes in the British power structure. The same old paddle-steamer of state cruising at half a knot in a tight circle fouled by Uncle Sam's patent rudder-locker. The crew may change shifts, but the scrambled-egg brigade remains the same.

This lack of change carries even more hardship to the subject peoples of Britain's imperialism. Ask such men and women as those of South Yemen or Zimbabwe if they see any changes in the British attitude towards them. Ask such school-less, factory-less, road-less, hospital-less, future-less masses if anything changes.

Under imperialism and old and new colonialism there is a lack of democracy, political illiteracy and no future. For that matter, how far is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland a democracy?

It is not the totality of our democratic right that once in a while we can enter a cubicle and scratch an illiterate cross against a nondescript list of pre-selected names with only one or two being in the betting anyway? And when our democratic representative is chosen, he is not obliged to inform the people of the workings of Parliament or explain these affairs, let alone allow reasoned and informed criticism and opinion by the people and people's organisations like the Trade Unions play a part.

Entry to the so-called European Economic Community, refusal to relinquish an imperialist posture, support of American overseas policies, the maintenance of a massive offence commitment and the continuance of our country as the World's piggy-bank open to the hammer of any speculator are factors which control every Briton's livelihood, health and happiness. We have no right to full information on these and many other problems. Moreover, even if we had the information, there is no mechanism whereby the will of the people as distinct from the will of bureaucracy, plutocracy, aristocracy and the parliamentary dictatorship can be sensed and implemented.

It has been said that Wilsonism follows the consensus. That it does, but the consensus of the City, of the Civil Service, of the militarists,

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capitalists, bishops, peers, experts and tycoons. But it is not the consensus of the people. Such a consensus is compatible with political illiteracy and it is this latter that the forces of reaction mistake for working-class apathy and inaction.

However, even when the people's views are known are they acted upon? While within the Labour Party, Trade Unions, Communist Party, Co-operative Movement, Liberal Party, CND, while from Church groups, scientists, artists, students and other youth groups and even within the ranks of the Young Conservatives(!) there is opposition to Britain's dutiful support of American aggression in Vietnam, the British Labour Government has not changed its attitude of unstinting US support at all from that of its Tory predecessors.

How can you wonder at the call for an extra-parliamentary opposition? We may not have an extra-parliamentary opposition as yet, but we certainly do have an extra-parliamentary power structure which is not amenable to democratic processes. Who elects the all powerful bureaucrats and financiers? What democracy yielded the House of Lords? When did the Welsh people elect a Secretary of State for Wales let alone a Prince of Wales? Who elects the officers of the Civil Service, Armed Forces, Police and such bodies as PIB, NEDC? Not the people. All we can do is scribble the X's.

Britain has a long and detailed past, the History books are full of it—or at least one version of it. Some will tell you that it is a glorious past. Many others, especially if they are not British, European, Christian or White, will brand this country's past as iniquitous and punctuated with barbarism, despotism and the misery of presumed social, racial, religious, political and cultural inferiors.

We have a present. A muddled, stagnant, push-you-pull-me, alternation of conservatist, reactionary Governments. The names of the politicians change, so do the titles of their Committees and White Papers, so too does the language of politics; but the policies themselves remain identical. We have a past and present, but no future. No plan mapped out in full co-operation with the people. No agenda that can be nailed up in every factory and office, every Town Hall, college and school; whose paragraphs can be ticked off regularly with rejoicing. No programme in which every man and woman knows that he is working as hard as everyone else and that he will reap the same benefits as all men and women will.

What is needed is an agenda that looks far into the future decades, a plan that is not authoritarian but that can be criticised by the

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people throughout its implementation. Such a programme can only come from a truly socialist Government. Such a plan must have as its aim nothing less than a Socialist Republic where the domestic colonialism of capitalism, the social reaction of class society and the atavism of both royal and religious feudalism are abolished. Such a plan, in contrast with the present Government, recognises the need for socialist solidarity with other like forces at home and abroad.

This lack of socialist internationalism is the most shameful and perverse feature of the present Government and has both near and far aspects. The Government actively aligns itself against the liberation forces in Vietnam, Zimbabwe and the rest of the Third World and against the Socialist World. The Government concerns itself with a bitter hate-campaign against the Communist Party even to the point of Mr. Wilson reduced to making music-hall jokes about Karl Marx's grave.

The anti-democratic and anti-socialist events at present underway in such places as Ulster, Eire, Greece, Nigeria, Ghana, Rhodesia, Guyana and India are not enough to call forth even a quiet word of support for the forces of freedom, democracy and socialism in these countries.

In contrast, when the Koreans seize the *Pueblo* spying in their territorial waters, when Egypt defends herself against a severe act of aggression, when the people of Vietnam or anywhere else dare to seek freedom the British Government screams an abusive anti-phony with the United States.

What Britain wants is a socialist Government which accepts that the Tsar will not return, that Chiang Kai-shek is out, that Marx is not a myth, that socialism is not just for the British middle-class sometime in the future, but that the only democratic, moral and humane ideal of the future is a world where the practice of socialism is the universal way of life. And what the British people need is a plan that can be posted up in every public place and have as its head 'Advance to the British Socialist Republic. Long Live the People!'

This can only come about by left unity, by a United Socialist Front designed to coalesce all socialists whether in the Labour Party, Communist Party, other groups or unaligned. Unity is the watch-word.

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THE MATERIAL THEORY OF LIFE

J. D. Bernal, FRS

'No species is ever changed, but each remains so much of itself that every kind of bird displays on its body its own specific markings. This is a further proof that their bodies are composed of changeless matter. For, if the atoms could yield in any way to change, there would be no certainty as to what could arise and what could not, . . . nor could successive generations so regularly repeat the nature, behaviour, habits and movements of their parents.'
Lucretius, *De rerum natura.*

HERE Lucretius, the Epicurean philosopher, shows the material necessity of the transfer of actual matter in hereditary process. He used it to prove the reality of unchangeable atoms but it may be used just as well to prove the existence of unalterable genes.

This short book* with its innocently obscure title conceals the account of what is probably the greatest scientific discovery of our time, comparable with that of the splitting of the atom. And what an account it is! Because Jim Watson is a born writer and can write so amusingly that it is impossible to put the book down.

Here is the account of an epoch-making discovery by the discoverer himself and written fresh from the laboratory where it was made. Watson writes directly and uninhibitedly about work which he was doing himself or with his not so senior mentor Francis Crick. Both are highly individualist characters and their presence together at such a crucial moment in science is a further proof that the day of the lone scientist is not over. This work is the result of the unconsciously co-ordinated work of dozens of biologists and a group which will henceforth call themselves molecular biologists.

Watson worked fast at the double helix so he was unable to do what every young research worker is advised to do at the outset—read the literature. If he had done so he would have saved himself a lot of time and trouble. For the subject of the nucleic acids was a well studied one and their biological importance fully recognised. Since Caspersson's work, they had been taken to be the chief constituent of the chromosomes, the carriers of the genes of inheritance and it had long been known as well that they contained the nitrogenous basis, the pyrimidines and purines. The two best known varieties of nucleic acid, yeast nucleic acid and thymus nucleic acid were alike in this.

The next decisive clue to their structure was the discovery that

* 'The Double Helix' by James Watson, *Weidenfeld and Nicholson*, 226 pp., 35s.

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they were high polymers and hence their solutions could be drawn into fine threads, a long chain of molecules like silk but containing the acid phosphoric groups. It was at this point that Astbury examined the fibres and found they were birefringent but negatively so, showing that the side groups were at right angles to the main fibre direction. From here the main interest had shifted back to the protein structure owing largely to Pauling's illuminating hypothesis of a non-integral helical and therefore only partially crystalline structure, itself an immensely liberating idea, which was to play a large part in the nucleic acid story.

I should say here that the distinction between the fully and partially crystalline structures was fully recognised in practice between Astbury and myself. I took the crystalline substances and he the amorphous or messy ones. At first it seemed that I must have the best of it but it was to prove otherwise. My name does not appear, and rightly, in the double helix story. Actually the distinction is a vital one. The picture of a helical structure contains far fewer spots than does that of a regular three-dimensional crystalline structure and thus far less detailed information on atomic positions, but it is easier to interpret roughly and therefore gives a good clue to the whole. No nucleic acid structure has been worked out to atomic scale though the general structure is well known. It may be paradoxal that the more information-carrying methods should be deemed the less useful to examine a really complex molicule but this is so as a matter of analytical strategy rather than accuracy.

A strategic mistake may be as bad as a factual error. So it turned out to be with me. Faithful to my gentleman's agreement with Astbury, I turned from the study of the amorphous nucleic acids to their crystalline components, the nucleosides. The easiest to prepare of these was cytidine. Very fortunately there came to my laboratory at that time a young crystallographer from Oslo in Norway, Sven Furberg, who had been working under Professor Hassel. He undertook the study of the structure of cytidine. He worked very quickly and well and the structure he found proved to have wide implications. In fact, had we realised it, it contained the key to the whole double helix story. But this key was never used because as far as we know neither Watson nor any of his friends either knew of it or realised its relevance.

There was a simple and entirely avoidable lack of communication here between men who knew each other and often worked in the same laboratories. I, myself, should have noticed it but I was too

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preoccupied with other things and so let the opportunity slip. This may stand as yet another example of a missed chance of an almost simultaneous discovery. I do not and will not make any claim to it for myself but I do think that, for historic justice, in the light of the importance of his work, Furberg's contribution has been grossly overlooked. By that time I had heard, in discussion with Crick, a nearly accurate account of the genetic code, so I fully recognised the importance of base order and I should have tried to work it into the X-ray picture of cytidine—another example of missed opportunity.

By this time, also, Rosalind Franklin—Rosy, in the book—had come to work in my laboratory. I had come to know and respect her and to admire her too, as a very intelligent and brave woman who was the first to recognise and to measure the phosphorus atoms in the helix, which proves to be the outer one, thus showing Pauling to be wrong and the helix to be a double one, though this inference is not drawn. Thus, all the elements of the structure of the full solution had been given though it remained to fit in the genetic evidence. This proved quite easy as the complementary self-replicating character of the double helix was almost self-evident. The clue to this was given by Chargaff who had observed that the sum of the pyrimidine bases was equal to that of the purine bases. Thus they could occur in natural paired bases, the pairs being held together by hydrogen bonds. Chargaff has never been given credit for this decisive discovery. Watson had played with the idea of a triple helix, which was absurd, and therefore missed the beauty of the two complementary strands. The mechanism of the transference was complicated but once that was achieved the rest was just filling in biological deduction though the biological consequences were to prove so far-ranging, offering the molecular key to the whole of reproduction.

All this is represented in *The Double Helix* in the form of a personal story in which the adventures of an American new boy in Cambridge society are fully and frankly described. College parties in rooms all come into it but despite the digressions the double helix is the hero of the piece and the naive pursuit of its structure the central theme. The book, therefore, becomes a kind of Moby Dick of the labs. In its pursuit and final capture we experience all the thrills without the dangers of the chase and all told without the conventional British self-effacing reticence; quite the contrary. Watson's self-revelations are often to the English mind positively embarrassing.

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Here he paints a picture of science as it really is—an interplay of ambitions, rivalries and intrigues which can only be guessed at from the printed texts. But is this picture true? No and yes. Watson tells all he knows but not all there is to know as I have shown. If he had done so, the story would have been shorter but less dramatic. More justice could have been done to Pauling's many decisive contributions instead of his being treated merely as an unsuccessful rival—which he was not. In all, Watson's colours are too bright, too unshaded for a scientific work. Nevertheless, it is a book about the greatest scientific discovery of our age and fully deserves to be the best seller it has become even if it is banned by Harvard and has incurred the wrath of the whole scientific community.

The picture of the making of a new science as well as the genuine account of how it was done contained in *The Double Helix* will be in itself a landmark in the story of science. It may serve to show how such a decisive breakthrough in human thought is not necessarily the work of an individual genius but only of a pack of bright and well-financed research workers following a good well-laid trail.

CORRESPONDENCE:

ALLOW ME, PLEASE, to correct a slight error in the Notes of the Month, May issue of *LM*.

It was not Clara Zetkin, but Rosa Luxemburg, who wrote in her last article, written after the defeat of the Berlin workers in the January battle and published in Rote Fahne on January 14, 1919, one day before she was murdered by Noske's white guards: ' "Ordnung herrscht in Berlin!" Ihr stumpfen Schergen! Eure "Ordnung" ist auf Sand gebaut. Die Revolution word sich morgen schon "rasselnd wieder in die Hoh' richten" und zu eurem Schrecken mit Posaunenklang verkünden: "ich war, ich bin, ich werde sein!" '

I am sorry not to be able to translate Rosa Luxemburg's wonderful words into adequate English and I hope you will excuse my altogether poor English.

As a faithful reader of *LM*, always waiting for the next issue.

SIEGBERT KAHN,
Berlin-Kopenick, DDR.

RPD writes: 'The attribution of the first use of this famous slogan to Rosa Luxemburg's immortal article on the eve of her murder is correct. I was carried away at the moment of writing by the resounding memory in my ears of having heard Klara Zetkin use the same inspiring words in a brilliant speech on fascism in 1923.

The rough translation of the passage which our correspondent justly says is untranslatable runs: ' "Order reigns in Berlin!" You dumb-witted minions! Your "Order" is built on sand. The revolution will soon again tomorrow "thunder in the heavens" and strike terror in your hearts with its trumpet call: "I was, I am, I shall be".'

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CAPITALISM IN CRISIS

Ron Bellamy

IN 1948 the bulging walls of Fort Knox were a symbol of American strength, a proof of her apparently unlimited capacity to undertake the task of world domination. In the following two decades she used that capacity: she became the principal exporter of capital; she became the capitalist world's principal banker and her currency the form in which weaker countries expanded their monetary reserves; politically she became the principal international gendarme against the freedom of nations and the progress of peoples.

In 1968 the bare floors of Fort Knox are proof that the mounting costs and strains of those combined tasks can drain the economic and financial strength of even the most powerful capitalist state.

Not only Vietnam, not only the socialist countries, but the United States' own imperialist rivals have contributed to this transformation. West Germany and Japan, for long substantially unburdened by armaments, modernised their industries and established rival positions in world production and trade. Recently even the US balance of merchandise trade finally moved into deficit. But it is Vietnam which has finally demonstrated the new truth, the difference between the thirties and the sixties. Then, to suppress a rebellion, a company of the Indian Army (to be paid for by Indians) was enough for Britain's use. For the US a company of thugs, with small arms, grenades and tear-gas, was enough. Now, the unsuccessful suppression of a nation-in-arms, equipped with the advanced products of socialist countries, costs the United States annually resources equal to two-fifths of British national output. This is the measure of the change in the balance of forces.

The resulting deficit in the US balance of payments has been financed partly by printing securities then paid to the United States' creditors, partly by outflow of gold. So long as the stocks of gold were large in relation to the drain, the power of the US, as an international banker, to pay her debts overseas mainly with dollar securities was unquestioned. But by 1965 US short-term liabilities abroad had grown to $25,000 m., while gold reserves had shrunk to $13,000 m.

For twenty years the world monetary system had operated on the assumption that the world's principal banker had the reserves necessary to meet all liabilities. Just as you do not demand cash from a man whose cheque is good and whose bank is sound, so you accept

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the IOUs of a country which has gold to pay. Only if his gold drains away, and you suspect his IOUs, do you demand payment in gold. For some years doubts had grown, as liabilities grew and reserves dwindled. The US was pressed to reduce the outflows that made the IOUs necessary. No adequate steps were taken, and mounting suspicions, fed by hostility towards the aims which the IOUs had served, reached a head in the world gold crisis of March 1968.

The meeting of the Club of Ten at Stockholm on March 29/30, expressed the recognition among the main capitalist powers that US weakness endangered the whole money and credit system of the capitalist world. The decisions that emerged were the result of their desire to use US weakness to advance their own positions, and their fear of destroying the linch-pin of the system. For the double role played by US credit creation was well understood. On the one side, with fictitious capital that cost nothing to create, and little to service, the US had bought abroad real assets which not only gave big returns but which represented economic bridgeheads from which to encircle and take over the principal strongpoints of privileged monopoly profit in their rivals' economies. On the other side, the growth of US foreign debt, by creating means of international payment had supported a growing volume of world trade, in which these rivals have increased their share, and whose weakening they feared as a source of politically dangerous unemployment and of divisive trade restrictions, especially since world trade in 1967 was expanding at only half the rate of 1964-66.

The creation of Special Drawing Rights by the Stockholm agreement is designed to replace unacceptable US credit by internationally guaranteed credit. But the other members of the Club, above all the German, French and Swiss central bankers, agreed to this only on two conditions. The first is that the balance of power inside the IMF shall change at the expense of Britain and the US. What is new here is that the non-Anglo-Saxon members of the Club instead of exercising pressure on the IMF through ancillary institutions outside it, will now exercise their power by increased votes and quotas within it. The battle over quotas takes place behind closed doors, but one cannot doubt that the ambitions of Frankfurt, Paris and Zürich to play a role in world capitalist finance comparable with their real strength will be satisfied. The second condition is that Britain and the US shall take steps to reverse their balance of payments deficits.

It can hardly be doubted that the desperate need to reduce the

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Vietnam bill is a factor in forcing the US to sit at Paris. But it would be naive to suppose that other measures will not be explored even in an election year. A tax surcharge which will cut private spending, coupled with a cut in domestic public spending, already accepted by the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, will deflate the US economy, and—it is widely feared—will depress the volume of world trade and sharpen the already existing pressures for restrictive trade controls in vulnerable countries. The political effects of such measures within the US are clear. Cuts in the Poverty Programme without cuts in the Vietnam bill will strengthen Senator McCarthy on the one hand, and on the other anger the March of the Poor already seated on the steps of the White House.

In France the gains of the working class, currently under negotiation, will force the French monopolists to go back on their earlier agreement to bring forward the date for the Kennedy and EEC tariff reductions, thus making it harder for both the US and Britain to reduce their trade deficits. It has been suggested during the French crisis days that French monopoly may attempt to recoup at the expense of the working class by a new devaluation of the franc. If so, the prospects for British exports, and for the present parities of the $ and the £ become even less promising. Suggestions that West Germany, the main beneficiary of Anglo-Saxon weakness, should revalue the Deutschmark upward and thus reduce German competitiveness in home and world markets strain the solidarity of the German monopolists at a time when the recent slump and its accompanying unemployment have begun to move the working class —and not only the working class—into increasing militancy.

So the situation is highly unstable. The time bought for the US by Stockholm has so far not been used, and the bankers grow impatient. The French crisis has pushed from the headlines the fact that the dollar price of gold remains obstinately above the danger level of $40. 'The two-tier gold market cannot last for a long time', said the President of the First National City Bank already on March 21, 1968. The position of the £, whose weakness is a threat also to the dollar, has not been strengthened by the Treasury decision (*Sunday Times Business News*, June 2) to guarantee Hong Kong's sterling balances in a form which gives protection against devaluation. For what has been given to Hong Kong cannot be refused to Malaysia and Kuwait.

The precariousness of the British export drive, seen by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe as the third

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condition for a solution to the world monetary crisis, is apparent in the revised (May 1968) 'guess' (I use the world advisedly) of the National Institute for the UK balance of payments. In February it 'estimated' a surplus of £100 m. for 1968: now (May) it has revised that downwards to a deficit of £350 m. and called for preparations for direct import restrictions. With opposition to the incomes policy growing, any new attempts to increase the burden on the working class can only exacerbate internal antagonisms.

The US defeats in and since the Tet offensive of the NLF have triggered off a chain of interrelated crises in the economic, financial, political and moral spheres. Those who had rejected, or never examined, the 'general crisis of capitalism' as a tool of scientific analysis will need to think again.

SOVIET SEA POWER AN INSTRUMENT FOR PEACE

Commander Edgar P. Young, RN Retired

'THE flag of the Soviet Navy now proudly flies over the oceans of the world. Sooner or later, the United States will have to understand that it no longer has mastery of the sea.' These words from a speech made recently by the C in C of the Soviet Navy, Admiral Segyey Gorshkov, have been made much of in articles which have been appearing in our newspapers. Backed up with speculative details which appear in *Jane's Fighting Ships* each year, regarding the increasing strength of the Soviet Navy, especially in submarines, they have been used to suggest to the people of Britain, in the first place, that the security of their country is endangered, as it was by the German Navy in two world wars, and in the second, that the Soviet Union is aspiring to use sea power as it was used in the past by Britain, for the creation of an empire and for the domination of small countries, and as it is being used by the United States now, for similar purposes.

Such fears are, however, ungrounded, as are also, I would interpolate here, those arising from the concomitant growth of the Soviet merchant fleet. There is nothing abnormal or sinister in either of these developments, actual or projected. The increase of the Soviet merchant fleet is merely a reflection of the increase of Soviet overseas import-export trade, which in turn reflects the massive economic

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development of the USSR. This was, of course, the origin of our own merchant fleet, without which our country's vital overseas trade would be at the mercy of foreign shipowners—and of the policy of their governments. The development of a Navy, to ensure free passage for that merchant fleet, is again quite normal, as also is evidenced by the history of our own country. Without it, there would not be Soviet and other socialist merchant ships taking supplies, as they are fully entitled to do, to the embattled Democratic Republic of Vietnam—past the US Fleet, on its self-styled 'peace-keeping' mission. Without it, the Republic of Cuba would long since have been starved into submission to its former American masters and exploiters by the quite illegal US blockade. Under cover of Soviet sea power, some 300 Soviet ships carried over 9 million tons of cargo to and from that gallant island last year, and we may be thankful that Soviet sea power has made it possible for British goods to be carried there, in execution of valuable industrial contracts, in ships of the socialist countries, when our own faded sea power has been unable to ensure freedom of passage for British ships.

Complaint is made, however, not only against this, but also, to quote from an article in *The Scotsman* of May 25, that whereas 'only ten years ago, the US Navy could land Marines unchallenged in Lebanon, today the Russians would be there to stop them'. The assumption that the US have some kind of 'right' to do this, arbitrarily, in a sea far removed from America is as absurd, of course, as is the ignoring of the right of the USSR to oppose it, in a sea which is virtually on its doorstep, though Soviet access to it is still severely restricted by an obsolete Convention governing the passage of warships through the Straits which link the Mediterranean with the Black Sea.

This last reference brings me to the important point, that the USSR, with an extremely long coastline, is strategically handicapped by her geography. This necessitates the maintenance of fleets adequate to local requirements in four widely separated areas—Arctic, Baltic, Black Sea, Pacific—between which intercommunication and reinforcements could become difficult, if not impossible in time of war. Taking this into consideration, it must be appreciated that the Soviet Navy is primarily defensive. And its defensive role must take into account, of course, that the main threat to the USSR is constituted by the Polaris-armed submarines of the US and its allies, deployed constantly (as they themselves boast) along the whole of its long coastline, and capable of striking devastating

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nuclear attack on many of its vital centres. It is against these, it must surely be evident, that the Soviet submarine fleet, the most effective counter to them, must be deployed, not for the hypothetical attack on the merchant shipping of their owners (which, as I have explained in an earlier article, is admitted by our Admiralty to be 'out of date').

It is significant, moreover, that the Soviet Navy has no aircraft carriers, now correctly designated by the Americans, who most favour them, as 'attack-carriers'. This fact, so awkward for the arm-chair 'strategists' who contribute alarmist feature articles to our newspapers, is got round by suggesting that 'commando-carriers', with Marines aboard, and helicopters for putting these ashore, are some kind of substitute for the absent 'attack-carriers', which of course is absurd. It may be useful to point out here, however, since our own Defence experts stress the value of such commando-carriers for dealing with 'brushfire' local wars and for similar alleged 'peace-keeping' purposes, that the Soviet conception of peace-keeping is very different from that prevalent in the capitalist countries, of which the US war of aggression in Vietnam is only the most massive and shocking example. The landing of Soviet Marines from such carriers for the suppression of a popular revolt against some iniquitous and oppressive ruler, or of a national struggle for the liberation of a country from foreign mastery and exploitation, would be quite unthinkable. But their presence makes more difficult the threat of armed intervention by some neo-colonialist power. It is awareness of this which makes such countries feel reassured in proportion as Soviet sea power becomes greater, and more extensive in its range. Some of the powers and propagandists which try to misrepresent the Soviet Navy as a weapon of aggression are possibly thinking in terms of their own country's imperialist record.

BOOKS

The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois
International Publishers, 448 pp., 95s.

WRITTEN IN HIS 90TH YEAR this book is of phenomenal scope, covering in a fascinating and enlightening manner not only the normal autobiographical aspect of one's life, but especially his development as scholar, sociologist, historian, editor, novelist and fighter—for his people and therefore for all people.

Dr. Du Bois centred the nearly ten decades of his life upon such fundamental questions of our times as racialism, colonialism, imperialism, war, illiteracy, hunger and exploitation. In the light of todays understanding, he recognises that his

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answers over these long years were not always correct—but even his enemies admit to his life being summed up in the phrase 'Intellectual honesty and integrity'.

The mountain peaks of the rich life of this greatest Negro American of the 20th century might be summarised under five headings:

A great scholar—the first Negro to receive a PhD from Harvard and from there to Wilberforce, Pennsylvania and Atlanta universities as lecturer—who refused to be cloistered away from the struggles of his people, even though he never had the feel for power, nor the power of oratory of the mass leader. From his prodigious labour poured forth scores of books, studies, essays, pamphlets—many of them still solid reference material today. Typical of his outlook for work, is a remark when he parted company with the NAACP secretary Walter White who 'wanted me for window dressing' to 'boost his prestige'. Du Bois comments: 'I myself had not even at the age of 80 felt any diminution of my power to work or to follow my ideals. . . . I had no thought of sitting down and doing nothing'.

His continuous challenge was to the oppressed status of his people and in never allowing the many public honours showered on him to quieten or subdue him. Outstanding historically was his challenge to Booker T. Washington's readiness to accept second-class citizenship for American Negroes and their relegation to the lowest type of industrial and agricultural labour. From this ideological struggle, which sharply divided the Negro leadership, there developed the Niagara Movement, the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) and the establishment of the magazine *The Crisis* which Du Bois edited for 24 years.

His early understanding of the rôle of Africa and his tireless struggle to establish the basis for the unity of the African people while they were still in colonial bondage. To this end he was the prime organiser of 5 Pan-African Congresses from 1918 to 1945. Unable to attend the 6th All-Africa Congress in Accra in 1958, he sent a message which said: 'I would emphasise that today Africa has no choice between private capitalism and Socialism. The whole world . . . is moving toward Socialism, inevitably, inexorably'.

His defence of peace and the Socialist world led in his 83rd year to his indictment and trial in Washington, charged with failure to register as an agent of a foreign government. This arose out of his leadership of the Peace Information Centre, which among other activities collected 2½ million signatures to the historic Stockholm Appeal. As a consequence of world protest, the judge ruled that the Government had failed to prove its case and dismissed it. Du Bois commented that the trial's frightening result was that although 'We five are free, America is not'.

Near the end of his lifetime—in his 93rd year—Du Bois joined the Communist Party, thus challenging the McCarran and Smith Acts. In his application he wrote 'I have been long and slow in coming to this conclusion, but at last my mind is settled'. In his book he writes, 'I believe in Communism . . . I know well that its triumph will be a slow and difficult task, involving mistakes of every sort, but it will win through'.

The leaders of the great Freedom Movement of the Negro people in the USA will undoubtedly be able to draw many lessons from Du Bois's life. It is significant that the late Rev. Martin Luther King, less than a month before his assassination reminded a capacity-packed Carnegie Hall memorial meet-

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ing that: 'Some people would like to ignore the fact that he (Du Bois) was a Communist in his later years . . . It is time to cease muting the fact that Dr. Du Bois was a genius and chose to be a Communist'.

The vision of this man is seen long before he embraced Marxism organisationally, when back in 1906 he said: 'The morning breaks over the hills. Courage, brothers! The battle for humanity is not lost or losing. The Slav is rising in his might, the yellow minions are testing liberty, the black Africans are writhing towards the light, and everywhere the labourer is opening the gates of Opportunity and peace'.

Be sure to read this book. It should be on the shelves of every local library up and down the country.

JOHN WILLIAMSON

The Power of the Prime Minister
Humphry Berkeley
Allen and Unwin, 128 pp., 24s.

BRITAIN'S TWO-PARTY SYSTEM has seldom looked more threadbare. The continual crises of the 1960s have demonstrated how the economic circumstances of British capitalism, rather than party differences, determine basic Government policies. This decade has stood Tory Tweedledum and right-wing Labour Tweedledee on high for all to see and compare. The result is that today, more than ever, the system itself is questioned. It is also becoming more evident that ruling class policies flow primarily from the narrows of No. 10 Downing Street rather than from the broads of the electorate, party membership, Parliament or even the Cabinet.

Mr. Berkeley (who recently left the Tories over their racial policies) declares quite flatly that 'parliamentary democracy has now collapsed at Westminster' and that 'the basic defect in the British system of Government is the supra-presidential power of the Prime Minister'. Drawing on his own experience as an MP, and on documents of the past centuries, he demonstrates that the history of the British system is a history of the concentration of power and decision-making at the top. Step by step each incumbent has in turn built up the Downing Street complex. First the Prime Minister established his own immediate supremacy over the Cabinet, then as powers were taken to meet crises they remained for all time. The Cabinet Office 'first appeared in the estimates in 1917; after the war it did not disappear'. This, and the Cabinet Secretariat are weapons of the Prime Minister. Policies are created in or channelled through the maze of Cabinet committees, chaired by or reporting to the Prime Minister. He, alone among Ministers, has a finger in every pie. An official told Bevin when he took over: 'We have not been the Foreign Office for years. We have been merely a post office for Number Ten Downing Street'.

The great gap in the book is its failure to question why the situation has developed as it has. Mr. Berkeley appears unaware of the effect which ruling-class policies have played on the character of Government, and of the real (if latent) power lying with the people and Parliament. But his book raises crucial issues, crucial questions concerning the growing centralisation of power in Britain. It is a valuable contribution to the current political debate.

ALAN BROWN

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Science and Psychiatry, Problems of the Scientific Approach to Mental Disorder
Brian Kirman, MD, DPM
Lawrence and Wishart, 82 pp., 7s. 6d.

MENTAL DISORDER HAS MANY ASPECTS and many causes. Most of these are as yet little understood and it is not surprising, therefore, that the subject has long been dominated by ignorance, superstition and prejudice. In recent years research has begun to solve some of the genetic, biochemical and social problems relating to mental disorder, and public attitudes to the mentally ill and subnormal have become more sympathetic and helpful. Patients are being cared for increasingly in the community but community care will not be effective unless the general public as well as the patients' relatives have a rational attitude based on a scientific approach to mental disorder.

Dr. Kirman's book is an excellent introduction to this way of thinking. With concise statements of facts and clear explanations he surveys the general background and the new approach to the effects of genetic factors. The interaction of heredity and environment in the production of symptoms and the effect of poor environment on underprivileged groups is discussed in relation to the social problem.

Our present knowledge of the causes of mental disorder is summarised in relation to schizophrenia, one of the commonest mental illnesses, and also to Down's disease, a very common form of mental retardation described 100 years ago by Langdon Down as mongolism, and recently discovered to be the result of chromosome anomalies. Another chapter describes the development of the mental health service, the present problem of old, under-staffed hospitals with inadequate finance preventing urgently needed improvements, and the uneven quality of service from area to area.

The final chapter deals with research, prophylaxis and health education. The author is a practising psychiatrist of wide experience who has undertaken research into mental retardation and written and lectured extensively on psychiatric subjects. He concludes that mental health demands more knowledge, more resources to apply existing knowledge to treatment and a healthier form of social organisation which will prevent psychiatric casualty.

L. T. HILLIARD

CZECH AWARD FOR D. N. PRITT

Readers will wish to join with us in expressing our pleasure and congratulations to Mr. D. N. Pritt on receiving the Gold Medal of the Czechoslovak Society for International Relations.

Mr. Pritt, a member of *LM's* Editorial Board and a frequent and valued contributor to the magazine, received the award for his tireless work throughout the years on behalf of justice and international understanding.

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NO RECESSION

THIS is the time of year when our usual anxiety about cash resources becomes sharply intensified. The holiday period is a costly time for most readers, and any decline in our Fund as a result of this could create a dangerous situation in coping with our essential commitments. The gallant struggles being waged all over the world at present can't afford a summer recess—the same applies to *LM*, with a job to do that doesn't allow for marking-time. Many readers are conscious of our increased problems at this time of year, and ensure that the Fund has first call on their generosity, but we need a mighty flow of donations to keep pace with ever-rising costs that unfortunately don't take a holiday break.

'Even to miss one issue would be a hardship', writes a Canadian reader, 'I only wish *LM* was twice monthly' this friend backs us with regular donations to secure our continuity. The Notes on Racialism drew many expressions of appreciation. A London reader, Fund stalwart of long-standing, reflected the view of most letters—'grateful thanks for the splendid June Notes. One reacts emotionally over the 'Colour' question but one needs reasoned argument to back it up. Only RPD could provide the latter so effectively'.

A friend whose concern for our Fund goes even beyond his monthly donation suggests we show our readers what comes in and what has to go out. 'I'm sure hundreds would spring into action if they thought *LM* was threatened'.

Well, our financial position can be put very simply—the Fund bridges the gap between income and expenditure, so for *LM* it spells security and the means to pay our way. **Helen Falber.**

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Political Economy of Socialism, Edited by G. N. Khudokormov. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 310 pp., 13s. 6d.

Russian Peasants and Soviet Power, M. Lewin. Allen & Unwin, 540 pp., 70s.

A History of Local Government, K. B. Smellie. Allen & Unwin, 176 pp., 30s.

The Open Philosophy and the Open Society, Maurice Cornforth. Lawrence & Wishart, 396 pp., 30s.

Science and Technology in British Politics, Norman J. Vig. Pergamon Press, 190 pp., 45s.

Red Revolutionary, Joan Charnock. Methuen & Co., 158 pp., 16s.

We All Fall Down, Robin Clarke. Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 202 pp., 35s.

Dark Days in Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah. Lawrence & Wishart, 164 pp., 12s. 6d.

The History of the TUC, 1868-1968, Edited by Lionel Birch. TUC in association with Paul Hamlyn, 160 pp., 12s. 6d.

Below Stairs, Margaret Powell. Peter Davies, 176 pp., 30s.

Immigration—Facts v. Myths, Labour Research Department. LRD Publications, 18 pp., 1s.

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